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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE-Public Health Service

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF MEDICINE

NEWS

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
SEP 24 1963
MEDICAL LIBRARY

VOL. XVIII, No. 9 Bethesda, Maryland 20203 SEPTEMBER 1963

ALA HONORS DIRECTOR

At its annual meeting the American Library Association presented the Melvil Dewey Award for 1963 to Frank Bradway Rogers, M.D., Director of the National Library of Medicine.

The Melvil Dewey Medal is given annually in recognition of "creative professional achievement of a high order." It represents one of the highest awards in professional librarianship. Citing Dr. Rogers' accomplishments in achieving a new building, new systems of subject headings and classification, and introduction of mechanization to bibliographic control, the Association referred to Dr. Rogers as "a real disciple of the spirit of Melvil Dewey."

RETIREMENT OF DR. ROGERS

After fifteen years of service as the Library's Director Dr. Rogers retired from the Public Health Service at the end of August to accept a position as Professor of Medical Bibliography at the University of Colorado Medical Center in Denver.

His career reached a climax with three recent events: the occupation of the new building in Bethesda, the creation of the MEDLARS system, and the holding of the Second International Congress on Medical Librarianship.

Dr. Rogers' retirement was marked by several eulogies on his highly successful career. Representative John E. Fogarty, Chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee responsible for the Library, memorialized Dr. Rogers' career in the Congressional Record for August 8, 1963. His staff and associates in the Washington area presented to him mementos of his years in the Library: a framed picture of the new building, a bound set of the Library's building plans, and a three-decker bound set of testimonial letters, photographs, and personal reprints.

His staff at the National Library of Medicine, his colleagues, and all who have been associated with Dr. Rogers wish him success in his new academic career.

ALL THE WAY HOME

The National Library of Medicine has received letters of appreciation from the Director of the British Museum for returning a very rare book to its rightful home.

In 1787 the London library disposed of a large number of duplicates. Librarians then being as subject to error as they are now, a few of those "duplicates" turned out later not to be duplicates at all. What made any loss harder to bear was that what went for two shillings in 1787 would now fetch a small fortune.

One such rarity was a small octavo volume entitled The treasure of pore men published by Robert Redman in 1540. It is not to be found in the standard bibliography of English books printed in this period. Professor Jackson of Harvard, working on a new edition of the bibliography, knew of the two copies owned by the NLM's History of Medicine Division, besides one owned by Yale, and a possible in King's College, Cambridge. On discovering that one of its two copies was stamped "British Museum Duplicate Sale 1787," NLM had to examine its conscience.

The Library airmailed the truant to the British Museum. The treasure of pore men now reposes again on the shelf it left 176 years ago.

MEDLARS PROGRESS

Work on the MEDLARS project is being carried forward at an increasingly rapid pace. The H-800 computer has been operated twelve hours daily, on an average, ever since it was installed at the end of March. Program modules are being debugged, modified, and integrated; it is a little appalling to see the bale of paper being removed from the mechanical printer each day for checking out, line by line, by the programming staff.

The job of converting 1963 material for input to the computer store has turned out to be a large one. Three ingeniously modified tape-typewriters accept the paper-tape output of the current (Listomatic) system, and convert it to a paper-tape format acceptable to the computer; typists have to add to each record the additional information, such as vernacular title, that is not in the present system but will be included in the new system. The job has turned out to be so large that the initial objective of entering all 1963 material has had to be abandoned in favor of limiting the input to 1963 English-language materials. Through July the number of citations placed in the computer store was 17,216.

The 10,000 citations in the August issue of Index Medicus have now been added to the computer store. They will be computer sorted and formatted and printed out on the mechanical printer as an equivalent issue, for comparison. The results are awaited with great interest.

Several "demand searches" have been run against the limited store and the results printed out in a variety of formats, including 3x5 cards. Much work remains to be done in checking out the exhaustiveness and reliability of these searches.

One of the main difficulties of testing the system is the continuing unavailability of GRACE, the high-speed high-quality output printer being developed for the Library by Photon, Inc. GRACE was originally scheduled for delivery in May; this delivery date was set back to July 22, and now the date has slipped again to September 30. In the interim, the General Electric team has written a special program to simulate GRACE output on the mechanical line printer. Using the program, tapes edited for GRACE output may be transformed and printed out on the mechanical line printer, with each line of text preceded by a line of symbols which indicate what GRACE would have done with it--in terms of font, upper and lower case, spacing, and so forth. These simulated Index Medicus pages are of tremendous interest and usefulness.

The slippage in GRACE delivery has a serious import for the original schedule for MEDLARS production, i.e., bringing out the January 1964 issue of Index Medicus in the new style. Testing of GRACE to insure operational readiness may require several months. If GRACE is not ready to accept the January issue, then the Library has two alternatives: (1) continue the transition conversion system for a longer period than had been planned, or (2) print the January issue (and possibly the February issue also) on the mechanical line printer, in two-column format, with a single upper-case font. This latter alternative is possible through incorporating relatively minor changes in the existing program. The mechanical printer alternative looks like the best bet to solve the dilemma. The firm decision will be reached soon.

Everyone at NLM will heave a great sigh of relief when the temporary transition system can be abandoned, and when the input can leap directly into the MEDLARS mode. Ten additional tape-perforating typewriters, without the special modifications, were delivered last month and will soon be pressed into use.

About 30 man-years of effort have been required to write the MEDLARS programs. The input module alone contains over 16,000 instructions (for a three-address machine). It will be a great day when this pent-up power is brought to bear on processing the huge bibliographic load.

NEW NLM PUBLIC SERVICE HOURS AND REGULATIONS

The move to Bethesda has caused an almost two-fold increase in public service loads. The number of readers and their requests for material and reference services continue to mount, month by month. In order to meet this demand for public service, the Library is extending its evening hours. Beginning September 3, the Library will be open to the public Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 10 p.m.; Saturday, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Sunday, from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m.

On September 3 also the Library will institute a policy of screening high school student applicants to determine whether their requirements are best served at NLM. Students of all ages will be admitted to the building to view the exhibit and public catalog areas, and for tours if requested. Students under 16 years may be admitted to the Reading Room only when they are accompanied by an adult or when granted permission by the Chief of the Reference Services Division. In general, the new regulations for high school student use of the Library are consistent with those of the Library of Congress.

SELECTION

Public Health in the Town of Boston, 1630-1822, by Dr. John B. Blake, Chief of the History of Medicine Division of NLM, is included in the list of 1,780 titles selected by the distinguished committee of librarians and scholars for the Presidential library to be established in the White House.

REFERENCE WORKS FOR RARE BOOKS

Mr. Richard J. Durling, senior cataloger in NLM's History of Medicine Division, has compiled Selected Reference Works for Rare Book Librarians. This bibliography was prepared for the students in Mrs. Jane M. Fulcher's Catholic University class in Medical Bibliography which held sessions at NLM this summer. Copies may be obtained by request to the Chief, History of Medicine Division.

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF MEDICAL REVIEWS

Volume 8, 1963, Bibliography of Medical Reviews, is now available from the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, at $1.75 per copy. Volume 8 contains citations to 6,633 review articles from the literature of 1962.

Use of funds for printing this publication approved by the Director of the Bureau of the Budget, January 18, 1963

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